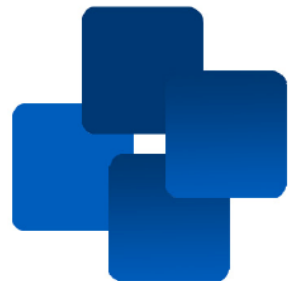


Patient Information

Fertility Treatment using Clomifene Tablets

Women's Services



Introduction

This information leaflet is for women undergoing fertility treatment who have been prescribed Clomifene (Clomid) tablets.

What is Clomifene?

Clomifene is a drug used in fertility treatment to stimulate the ovaries to produce eggs (ovulation). It is not a hormone but alters your 'hormone' balance to help your ovaries produce eggs.

What are the benefits of Clomifene?

The aim is to increase ovulation and increase the chance of you becoming pregnant. The tablet works best if your BMI is between 19 and 30; any lower or higher will affect the success rates. If you are significantly overweight, you will be advised to lose weight before commencing Clomifene tablets.

What are the risks of Clomifene?

There are a few small risks and side effects as with most medications, these include:

- Multiple pregnancy - Approximately 1 in 10 women who conceive using Clomifene have twins. Less than 1 in 1,000 have triplets.
- Headaches
- Abdominal pain
- Ovarian cysts
- Hot flushes
- Blurring of vision or yellow colouration of vision; if this occurs stop taking your tablets and consult your GP
- Ovarian hyperstimulation (where the ovaries have over responded to Clomifene) – this is very uncommon

What are the alternative treatments to Clomifene?

There are a few different treatment options to induce ovulation which include:

- Tamoxifen tablets
- Letrozole tablets
- Metformin (may be combined with Clomifene) in women with PCOS
- Laparoscopy (key hole surgery) and 'drilling' of ovaries in women with PCOS
- Injections of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH)
- Assisted conception treatment, e.g. IVF/ICSI

These different treatment options may not be suitable for everyone. Your doctor or nurse would discuss and recommend the most appropriate treatment option for you.

How do I take Clomifene tablets?

The usual dose of Clomifene is 50mg and it is taken by mouth.

It is to be taken for five days per month from day two to day six of your menstrual cycle. Day one is the first day of your period (the day you start to bleed).

You need to take this tablet at the same time every day for the best results.

You should have regular intercourse (on average two to three times a week) throughout your fertility treatment to improve your chances of getting pregnant.

How long can I take Clomifene for?

If ovulation has occurred but you are not pregnant, in the next cycle you should take the same dose of Clomifene. Once ovulation has been confirmed, it is usual to continue on the same dose for up to six cycles in total.

If a pregnancy has not occurred after six ovulatory cycles, you will be asked to see your consultant to review and discuss your treatment options.

What if my menstrual cycle is irregular?

If your cycle has been irregular in the past and you are not sure when your next period is due, you may be given a progestogen (hormone produced by the ovary during the menstrual cycle) tablets to 'bring on' a period.

Taking the progestogen tablet will cause you to have a 'withdrawal' bleed similar to a period. The first day of the bleed can be counted as day one of your cycle. The doctor or nurse will explain this further to you at your appointment.

How will I know if Clomifene is working?

Day 21 progesterone blood test

You may be asked to have a blood test during the menstrual cycle in which you are taking Clomifene. We usually take this blood sample on day 21 of your menstrual cycle and measure levels of the female hormone called progesterone. A level of 30 nmol/L or more is a good result. If the level is lower than 30 nmol/L (suboptimal) we may increase your dose of Clomifene and re-check your blood level on day 21 in your next cycle. The doctor or nurse may also discuss other treatment options with you.

If you are advised to have a day 21 progesterone blood test, please contact the fertility team about two days after the blood test for the results, and further advice on adjusting your Clomifene dose (if required).

Telephone: 0758 450 9341 or email: fertility.enh-tr@nhs.net

You may not receive the advice immediately but we will contact you by post or telephone with the plan regarding your Clomifene dosage. **Do not increase the dose yourself without medical advice.**

A scan of the ovaries

If you are advised to have a scan of your ovaries, this is usually done from day 10 of your cycle. You may need more than one scan. Once a mature follicle is seen on scan, we may arrange a blood test a few days later to check whether you have ovulated.

If you have been advised by your doctor or nurse to have a scan specifically to monitor your response to Clomifene, you will need to contact the fertility team on day one of your period to arrange this.

Telephone: 0758 450 9341 or email: fertility.enh-tr@nhs.net

Not everyone needs a scan of the ovaries and most women would be adequately monitored on blood tests alone. Your doctor or nurse will advise you on the method of monitoring your response to Clomifene.

What if I do not have a period after taking Clomifene?

If your period is more than a week late, you must perform a pregnancy test. If you are not pregnant, it is likely you did not ovulate in that cycle and we may advise you to increase your Clomifene dose with further monitoring.

What is my predicted response to treatment with Clomifene?

There are many factors that would influence your response to the treatment and whether you get pregnant. In general, 7 out of 10 women will ovulate on Clomifene, and 3 to 4 out of 10 will get pregnant.

Clomifene may not be suitable for every woman and your doctor or nurse will advise you if alternative treatment options are more appropriate.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any concerns about Clomifene or need further information, then please do not hesitate to contact the fertility team (please see the back cover for contact details).

Please use this space to write down any questions you may wish to ask.

Useful contact details

Lister Hospital, switchboard

☎ 01438 314333

Fertility Team

☎ 0758 450 9341

Email: fertility.enh-tr@nhs.net

Further Information

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/conditions/infertility/treatment/

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA)

www.hfea.gov.uk

National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE)

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG156

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